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Mines Divert More Ships, U.S. Reports

By Michael Gettler

Washington Post Staff Writer

The Pentagon reported yesterday that "several more ships" that were en route to North Vietnam have apparently been "diverted" because of the U.S. mine barrier.

Pentagon spokesman Jerry W. Friedheim announced the changes in the ship movements, but refused to provide any information on their courses.

Other sources said, however, that "it is possible, and it is legitimate speculation" that some Soviet-bloc ships may be headed for Chinese ports near North Vietnam to unload their cargoes for transshipment to their original destination. These sources caution that "it is too early to tell" with certainty.

If the ships do head for China, it could signify a Soviet intent to outflank the U.S. mining operations while avoiding a naval confrontation with the Americans.

Two Soviet warships—a cruiser and a missile-equipped destroyer—were reported yesterday by the Japanese Self-Defense Agency to be steaming southward through the Tsushima Strait between Japan and South Korea, an area more than 1,500 miles north of Hanoi.

The ships, from the Soviet port of Vladivostok, were said to be the first Russian naval vessels seen going south through the strait since the Pakistani-Indian war last December.

But officials here said there was no way to tell where they were headed. They noted that the ships were steaming at 10 knots, far less than their top speed of about 30 knots.

To pose any serious challenge to the mine barrier and the vast U.S. armada in the area the Soviets would have to send scores of ships, planes, submarines and, most importantly, minesweepers.

So far, informed sources say no major Soviet naval movement is underway nor do Soviet or Chinese minesweepers appear to be headed toward the area.

The movement of the two ships, however, could represent the start of a gradual Soviet naval buildup.

Contrary to some reports from Hanoi, Friedheim said the North Vietnamese have made no effort to clear the mines from their harbors and reiterated that Hanoi has no ships actually equipped to get these deadly and hard to remove explosives out of their harbors.

Another sign that Communist ships bringing supplies to the North may go to China instead was reported by The Associated Press from London yesterday.

According to the AP, senior Communist diplomats there—unidentified in the report—named two South China ports that could handle the shipments. They forecast that despite the continuing Sino-Soviet feud, the U.S. mining policy almost certainly will lead to extension of the existing rail-supply agreement among China, Russia and North Vietnam to include use of Chinese ports.

The Soviets for years have made extensive use of two main rail lines through China to North Vietnam.

The two ports named by the Communists are Peihai and Ch'inhsien, both near major road and rail networks about 100 miles north of Hanoi.

Peihai was mentioned along with the larger ports of Canton and Fort Bayard by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency in its report to President Nixon's National Security Council in early 1969 on Vietnam.

The CIA estimated then that "all of the war essential imports could be brought into Vietnam over rail lines or roads, from China in the event that imports by sea were successfully denied."

The United States is now heavily bombing those overland lines, but defense analysts are far less convinced that the bombing will work as well as the mining to shut off supplies.

The CIA still contends that most of the actual arms—guns and ammunition—continues to arrive overland.

The major fuel, food and truck shipments arrive by sea through Haiphong. The fuel, however, is viewed as particularly crucial to the current

North Vietnamese offensive, which relies heavily on tanks, trucks and mobile artillery and air defenses.

A Soviet end-run around the Haiphong mine fields would get the fuel into the area just north of the border and subject it to bombing—the less effective of the two-pronged U.S. effort to shut off the supplies.

There were about 25 ships heading toward North Vietnam before the mines were laid, about half of them Soviet. About five or six turned back toward the Soviet Far East port of Vladivostok.

Friedheim also disclosed yesterday that two and possibly three more ships got out of Haiphong just before the mines were activated at 7 a.m. (EDT) Thursday. These are in addition to five ships that were previously reported as having left. That means that 28 or 29 ships are trapped by the mines in Haiphong.

At least one and possibly two of the three freighters that also got out are Russian. The other was flying a Somali flag.

Friedheim also revealed that two Chinese vessels were bottled up in Vinh, and two Soviet ships at Campha because of the mines. These are smaller coastal type freighters. The two ports are among six other relatively small harbors that were mined in addition to Haiphong.

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Will Mining Harbors Work?

Quite apart from all other questions, there is no exact answer to the practical one: Will mining the harbors of North Vietnam work?

The CIA and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, according to the Pentagon papers have disagreed over the question for some time, presumably they still do. In March of 1968 a Pentagon staff group working for Secretary of Defense Clark Clifford concluded: "It has become abundantly clear that no level of bombing can prevent the North Vietnamese from...carrying on the war in the South". It then went on to deal with mining: "The remaining issue on interdiction of supplies has to do with the closing of the port of Haiphong. Although this is the route by which some 80 per cent of North Vietnamese imports come into the country, it is not the point of entry for most of the military supplies and ammunition. These materials predominantly enter via the rail routes from China..." In 1969, the CIA reaffirmed this position, and this was in the early days of the Nixon administration. At that time, the Joint Chiefs were reported in total disagreement with the CIA assessment.

One can only conclude that the Russians have decided that various combinations of approaches will keep North Vietnam suf-

ficiently supplied, and they have probably rightly concluded that the United States is not about to engage in the air unarmed Soviet supply planes, should it be necessary to resort to an airlift. The U. S. itself has been utilizing its huge cargo planes to replace the 60 tanks which have been destroyed by the North Vietnamese attackers. And just as soon as the South Vietnamese can find the tank crews that deserted, or were separated from their units, the new 60 tanks will be in action. The North has no such problems — its tank crews are no doubt assembled and awaiting new tanks.

The sum and substance of it all is that the chances look like alternate supply routes can be developed, but the absolute statement can not be made. This is especially true, because one study indicated that 2½ times the amount of supplies that have ever come into North Vietnam from all sources, could be moved on existing rail and canal lines from China. The process would be less efficient, but because supplies now in North Vietnam are so extensive, there probably is time to get the new process in action. At the least, the Soviets have to be in no hurry to find a solution, and in fact they don't have to be reminded that none of their men are dying as the war drags on.

Candidate Critical Of Nixon

Jed Reveals His CIA Pals

By STEVE DIMICK

Of The Journal Staff

U. S. senatorial hopeful Jed Johnson spent more than two years as an undercover agent for the Central Intelligence Agency during the early 1960s, he said Friday.

Johnson said he carried on CIA activities in more than a dozen Asian, African and Latin American countries while working for one of the front organizations exposed in the "CIA on campus" scandals in 1967.

The former Sixth District congressman Friday released a copy of a speech he will deliver to the Oklahoma Jaycees convention Saturday, in which he reveals his CIA involvement.

He said a controversial trip to Cuba he made while a student at Oklahoma University which was later thrown back at him during his 1964 congressional race, also was actually a government-sponsored "intelligence-gathering" trip.

In his speech to the Jaycees, Johnson will attack President Nixon's new interdiction policy against North Vietnamese supply routes. He bases his criticism largely on his knowledge of the CIA, which reportedly has claimed that the blockade will not work.

Johnson quotes from the "Kissinger Papers," a secret government study conducted by the CIA and other information gathering groups and made public by columnist Jack Anderson two weeks ago. The study reported the CIA's belief that no amount of interdiction will be successful in stopping the flow of war materiel to North Vietnam.

"I am personally acquainted in some depth with the degree of precision that the CIA operates within its intelligence activities, because I worked under contract as a covert agent for the CIA prior to my election to the Congress," Johnson said.

"At that time, the CIA had extremely detailed information on such things as which hand an obscure African provincial chief would eat with and the vintage of his favorite wines," he said.

"I am convinced after reading the Kissinger Papers that the CIA estimates of our capacity to interdict supplies was done with similar attention to precision and gave absolutely no reason for encouragement that this military action will successfully bring the war to a conclusion."

In an interview with The Oklahoma Journal before his announcement Saturday, Johnson said he worked for the CIA from 1962 to 1964. He said his experience as an agent has caused him to have "complete faith" in the CIA's assessments of various situations and in the agency's

"I know that the CIA is very, very meticulous and careful in its evaluations and is accurate and precise," he said.

"The point is, if the CIA has given such an evaluation (of the Vietnam blockade), I know they've done a thorough assessment of the situation. They're very capable people and are not political; they're very apolitical.

"While I was never involved in CIA operations in Southeast Asia, I know personally that they literally can tell you the minutest details about minor African political figures and I'm sure they have done the same type of investigation in Vietnam," Johnson said.

Johnson said he was not at liberty to disclose his former CIA ties while he was a member of Congress because the Foundation for Youth and Student Affairs, the dummy foundation for which he worked, was still in business.

"For me to say anything would have literally endangered the lives of some of our people overseas," he said.

He came back to the U.S. early in 1964, on leave from the Foundation, and then resigned from the organization before he made his successful race for Congress.

Johnson served in Congress from 1964-66. He said the "whistle was blown" on the cover of the dummy foundation in 1967.

"I'm still not sure how much I'm at liberty to tell you," he said.

The former student leader at the University of Oklahoma said he was approached by the CIA (referred to among agents as "the firm") in 1962, a year after his graduation from college.

"They contacted you to see if you were interested and then did a very thorough security clearance," he said. "Later, you were taken to a hotel room where you had to sign an oath saying you would not divulge any secrets or critical information.

"After that, I was what they call 'under contract' to the CIA until I resigned," he said.

"It was fascinating work," he said. "If I hadn't run for Congress, I might have made a career out of the CIA."

Johnson said he actually worked for the U.S. Youth Council, which was funded by the Foundation for Youth and Student Affairs, which in turn was funded by the CIA.

His duties, about which he was never too specific, involved basically being a sort of goodwill ambassador-cum-spy.

"I led delegations of young Americans to developing nations and spoke before various legislative assemblies," he said. "We met with leaders of countries, presidents, prime ministers.

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Communist officials," he said.

"I also did get information on what the political ideology was of up-and-coming political leaders," he said.

Johnson balked at the word "propaganda" when asked whether his job entailed more gathering of information or disseminating propaganda.

"It involved a lot of both," he said. "But we were never told what to say by the CIA. We were never given any orders about what to say in a speech.

"I was simply a youth leader telling them what we believe, why our economic system is the most productive, why our political system is the best."

Johnson's undercover activity began when he was still in college, with a 1959 trip to Cuba which later returned to haunt him during his congressional race in 1964.

"There were charges made during the campaigning that I had taken this trip with other student leaders in defiance of the State Department," he said. "This was untrue. The trip was sponsored by the U.S. government.

"I was asked by people in the State Department to make the trip to get information about what was going on," he said.

At the time the group of young student leaders made the trip, shortly after the Cuban revolution, "we didn't know that things in Cuba would go the way they went," Johnson said.

He said another of his missions was to debate young Communist leaders in Cuba.

However, he was not able to reveal in 1964 that he had known in 1959 that the Cuban trip was a government-sponsored one.

"It was a very interesting experience, but it was frustrating that I couldn't rebut some of the charges made against me," he said.

"As a result of that trip and some other activities I was involved in, I was later asked to become an agent for the CIA."

During his years as an agent, under the code name "Mr. Page" ("I chose that name because I had been a page in the Senate and thought it would be easy to remember,"), he was at liberty to tell only his wife of his activities.

"There were a couple of agents before me who had just disappeared," he said.

Johnson says he still has faith in the persuasive and example type of diplomacy, the former the kind he said is practiced by the CIA.

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 Foundation